



# NEWS

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## ***Winter Spare the Air Season Begins Saturday, November 1, 2008*** *New Wood Burning Rule Makes it Illegal to Burn When Air Quality is Unhealthy*

**SAN FRANCISCO** – In an effort to protect public health, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District will open the *Winter Spare the Air* season on Saturday, November 1, and begin enforcing a regulation that restricts wood burning in the Bay Area.

“Wood smoke is associated with a multitude of serious health risks, and is particularly harmful to children, the elderly, and those with respiratory problems,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air District. “This winter, we’re reminding Bay Area residents to check the burn status before using their fireplaces or woodstoves, since it will now be illegal to burn wood when we issue a *Winter Spare the Air Alert*.”

Between November 1, 2008, and February 28, 2009, the Air District will declare a *Winter Spare the Air Alert* when air pollution is forecast to reach unhealthy levels. During a *Winter Spare the Air Alert*, the use of wood-burning devices, including fireplaces, pellet stoves, wood stoves and outdoor fire pits, is forbidden. There are expected to be, on average, approximately 20 *Winter Spare the Air Alerts* during the season.

The daily air-quality status and details on exemptions from the Wood Burning Rule can be found:

- On the Air District Web sites: [www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov) or [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org)
- Via the toll-free hotline 1-877-4-NO-BURN
- By signing up for e-mail AirAlerts at [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org)

Under the new rule, those who burn wood during *Winter Spare the Air Alerts* will receive a written warning for their first violation. A second violation could result in fines that range from several hundred to several thousand dollars, depending on the severity of the infraction. Residents and businesses that burn wood as their only source of heat are exempt from the regulation.

Under the new rule, only EPA-certified wood stoves or fireplace inserts, pellet stoves, or natural gas devices can be sold or installed in new construction or remodels. The new rule also places year-round prohibitions on excessive smoke, and on the burning of garbage and other harmful materials in fireplaces and woodstoves.

Wood smoke is a major source of wintertime air pollution in the Bay Area and contains harmful pollutants such as particulate matter and carbon monoxide, as well as toxins such as dioxin, which is linked to increased cancer rates in adults. In the winter, wood smoke from the 1.4 million fireplaces and wood stoves in the Bay Area contributes about one-third of the harmful particulate pollution in the air.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District ([www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov)) is the regional agency chartered with protecting air quality in the Bay Area.